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STRAY LEAVES







READY.

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A Scandinabian Legend,

ВΥ

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STRAY LEAVES.

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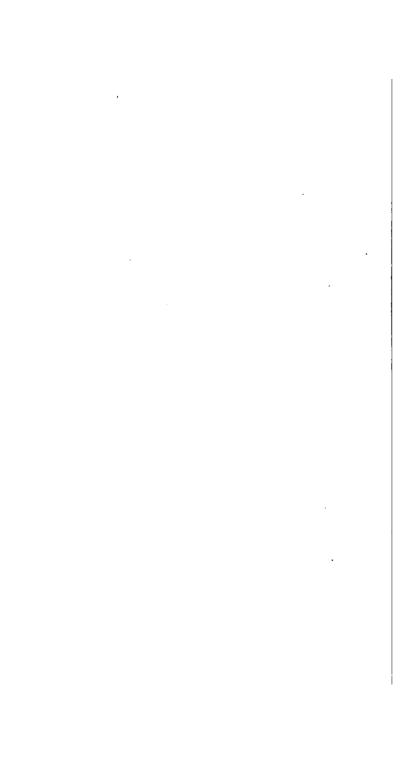


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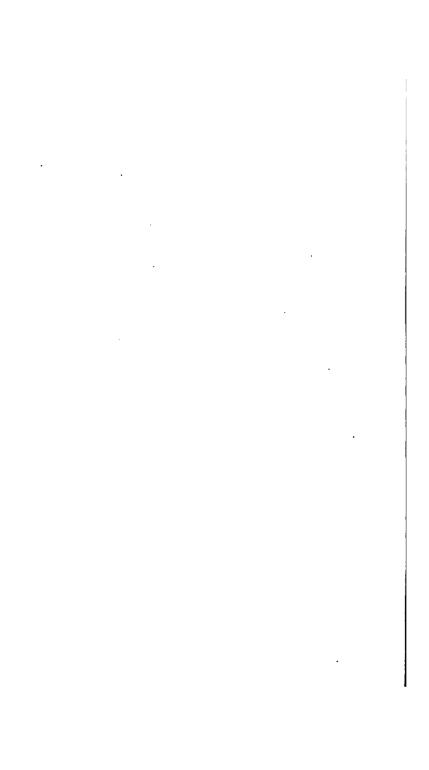
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Dedicated to R. M.



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STRAY LEAVES.

INTRODUCTION.

Tis not always a classic theme
That gives most pleasure to the ear,
For poorer music oft may seem
More tuneful; and sometimes we hear
A vulgar air played in the street,
Which none can praise, yet it is sweet,
Because with its hackneyed refrain
It leads us to our home again;
And brings the happy days to mind,
When life was full of hope and joy.

Thus, gentle reader, you may find Some pleasure in my humble lays; And though their worth you cannot praise, Their homely thoughts may yet employ An idle hour; and without blame You may pass by their faulty tone.

With this apology, they claim
Your kind indulgence. But I own,
This favour I expect alone
From those to whom children are dear:
Foolish to others must appear
The trivial subjects of my song;
Therefore, it is not to the throng
That I would show my pen's career.

MEMORARE.

Remember, most gracious and merciful Maid, The suppliant never in vain sought thine aid; The prayer that ascends from a heart in sore pain, Can't fail in its mission thy pity to gain.

Inspired with this trust in thy succour and care, My Mother, my Refuge, my Hope in despair, I fly to thy shelter, and prostrate I fall; O Virgin of virgins, hear me when I call!

O Mother, look down on a fair little face, Reposing awhile in sweet slumber's embrace; So still she is lying, that life might have fled, And left her to rest in the sleep of the dead.

The sculptor would aim such a face to unfold From out of the marble he labours to mould; But only the angels in Heaven's high place Can share such a beauty and innocent grace.

Ah, sweet were the fate, if to me it were given To rescue the treasure I prize next to Heaven; And sweet 'twere to suffer, if thus I might gain The life of my darling, or save her from pain.

A life for a life is the offer I make, And ask thee, sweet Mother, for Jesus' dear sake, To take what is useless, and withered, and lone— But spare the fair flower that gives joy to a home.

O Mother of Christ! I have made my request, Chide not the complaints that are wrung from my breast;

But deign to look down from thy throne in the skies, And answer in pity my tears and my sighs.



A VALENTINE.

I'll tell thee how I love thee, dear,
If thou wilt rest awhile,
And let my eager valentine
A passing thought beguile.

I love thee, as the birdies love The sunshine's pleasant rays, Which chase away the winter snow And brighten gloomy days.

The brightest days that ever dawned Were those I spent with thee, In learning how to join thy play, Or lull thee on my knee.

But now, alas, thy merry voice No longer cheers my heart, And other symbols I must choose, To tell how dear thou art.

I love thee, dear, as loves the bee The fragrance of the flower, From which she gathers golden drops To beautify her bower. A treasure, thus, I've stolen from thee, Thou cans't not guess it's worth; It is the sweetness of the dream To which thy smile gave birth.

I love thee, as the flowers love
The dew-drops of the morn,
Which they retain with gentle clasp
Within their tender form.

So would I cherish thee, my love, With many a fond caress, And my embrace should prove to thee The love I can't express.

I know, dear, that thou cans't not give Such love as I bestow Upon the ground thy feet have touched In racing to and fro.

Thou cans't not give, nor do I ask For any such return; Enough for me to live and love, If but a smile I earn.

GOOD NIGHT.

Hush dear—mamma must tenderly press
On the smooth forehead a last fond caress,
Ere drowsy eyelids in slumber confess,
Unconsciousness.

One kiss again, for the fingers that stray Over her cheek and her lips in their play, And thou shalt hasten to dreamland away, Till break of day.

Sleep dear—rest will be peaceful and sweet, And in the visions that thou mayest meet, Think of the love, which a heart at each beat, Lays at thy feet.

SOUVENIRS.

Let me reckon up my treasures, And my secret wealth unfold, Gloating over each fond token, Like a miser counting gold.

First I prize a little ringlet Of my darling's sunny hair, Which I stole away one morning From her tresses soft and fair.

To my lips I often raise it, Caged within its golden bed, And a kiss I think I'm pressing On my dear one's curly head.

Then I have a tattered leaflet, Over which her fingers strayed, Faintly tracing baby fancies With a broken pencil's aid.

Little beauty it discloses, But I love each crooked line, For I watch her busy fingers, And I feel their clasp on mine. And I have a last dear treasure, In the happy little face, Which is framed beside my pillow, Smiling on my resting place.

Poor, indeed, is its resemblance To the face I see no more; Yet it faithfully depicts me Something of the grace it wore.

So I gaze in expectation,
Till the features dimly shown
Live again with the expression
And the smile that I have known.

Till once more I meet her welcome,
Bending low upon my knee,
And my arms again encircle
All the world contains for me.

Ah, how little dreams another Of the wealth that I possess In these relics of her presence, Left behind, my life to bless.

What to others seems so common, Is most dear unto my sight, For love's poorest recollection Has its calm and sweet delight.

BIRTHDAY GREETING.

What shall I wish for thee to-day, My darling say?

Shall I wish thee many years

Happiness undimmed by tears,

Joys to gild each morning light

With a sense of new delight,

And whatever dreams are sweet

In the quiet hours of sleep?

What else, O tell me, can I pray
For thee to-day?
I have thought of many a thing,
Which the future years may bring,
To enhance the precious boon
Of a life's unsaddened noon:
Wealth and beauty, and the praise
Of the world's admiring gaze,
Brilliant powers of the mind,
With unerring taste combined.

But, while fancy decked the form Which it strove thus to adorn, I escaped in sudden pain From the phantom of my brain; For I felt no lady grand Could like thee my soul command, Or engage the vacant place Of my darling's baby face.

What wish then shall I breathe to-day,
What shall I pray?
Ah, be ever what thou art,
Gentle, loving, pure in heart,
Innocent and free from guile,
As thy guardian angel's smile;
Such thou art, such mayest thou be,
This, dear, I will wish for thee.



LULLABY.

The flowers, dear, are closing,
Their treasures they're folding
Within the soft leaflets
Which hide them at night;
So let thine eyes beaming
Be veiled for sweet dreaming,
Beneath the fair eyelids
So pure and so white.

Lovely in awaking,
When morning is breaking,
Appears the bright lustre
That shines in thy face;
Yet slumbers but render
Thy beauty more tender,
For then the long lashes
Display their soft grace.

How joyful the duty
To gaze on such beauty,
While nature is lying
In silent repose;
And over thee bending,
To steal, in ascending,
Thy lips' dewy perfume,
More sweet than the rose.

Ah, if the oblation
Of love's adoration
Can woo to thy slumber
Fair visions of light;
Then blest 'neath my keeping
Shalt thou be in sleeping;
My own precious dear one,
My joy and delight.



SMILES AND TEARS.

Often my pulse has throbbed with joy,
When lingering at the door,
I've listened to the pattering feet
Upon the nursery floor;
And heard a merry voice that told
A welcome was in store.

And yet, I love best to recall
An hour at eventide,
When fretted by a passing pain,
With childish grief she cried;
And though in tears, and sorrowing,
Still called me to her side.

Then painful as it was to see
My darling touched by woe,
A thrill of selfish happiness
My heart could not forego;
For when they suffer, children turn
To those whose love they know.

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GUARDIAN ANGELS.

Kneeling at her mother's side,
She repeated, soft and low,
Simple prayers for eventide,
Such as little children know;
And she prayed for nearest kin,
Asking God to pardon sin
And His blessing to bestow.

Though the eye would sometimes stray,
And its rovings thought might share,
Yet the faltering lips' essay,
Rose like incense on the air;
Rose with the prevailing power
Lent by innocence, the dower,
Of the little children's prayer.

Image of the angel form,
Charged by Heaven my guide to be,
Sinfulness I've learnt to mourn,
For it separates from thee;
Deign but in my heart to rest,
And each hour thy presence blest
Will support and comfort me.

THANKFULNESS.

"What is it the birdies say?"
Asked my darling, as she lay
Wearied by an hour's play
In the noontide heat:
"What is it (she whispered low)
That in flying to and fro,
As they come, and as they go,
They so oft repeat?"

Then I told her what I guess
Their sweet carols may express,
When they lend their voice to bless
Summer's balmy air;
They are telling their delight
In the heaven's joyous light,
And with praises they requite
The Creator's care.

From herself I learnt the spell
Under which the songsters dwell,
Hovering o'er mead and dell,
In the azure sky:
She is to us in her home
All the joy the birdies own,
When they sing in sweetest tone,
Gratitude's reply.

AMBITION.

Sometimes ambition seeks the fame Belonging to a mighty name;
Desires that strangers passing by
May pause the great one to descry,
And gather round, in crowded bands,
Where'er as orator he stands.
May it succeed—what I would seek
Is for a little child to speak
A word of welcome; and to cling
(Wer't only for the toys I bring)
About my neck with soft caress,
While kisses on her lips I press.

Sometimes ambition seeks the board Of noble lady or of lord,
The leaders in the foremost place Of fashion's pleasure hunting race.
Each to his taste; I'd rather hear A little voice that calls me near To take a seat beside her chair,
And of her frugal meal a share.

STRAY LEAVES.

And others wish much to excel
In harmony's seductive spell,
Or in some other art to shine,
Bequeathed to earth by power benign.
Long may art gratify the ear
And every sense that holds it dear;
Yet all the skill for which I pray,
Is to engage a child in play.

And some, a numerous class they are,
Make affluence their guiding star,
Endeavouring with toil to gain
The eminence the wealthy claim.
But there's a gem of rarer worth
Than mines of gold beneath the earth;
More precious than the jewels stored
Within the depths yet unexplored;
And what is it? what can it be?
(You'll ask) that is so dear to me:
Ah, 'tis a corner, as I've shown,
Which in a heart I think I own.

STORYTELLING.

Do you ask a story, darling,

To beguile the twilight hour,

While the winter day is fading,

And the darkening shadows lower?

While the log burns up more brightly

On the hearth to give us cheer,

And the flickering flame is dancing

Like the phantoms on the mere?

When we thus are closely cuddled
In the cosy old arm-chair,
Brightest visions should enfold me,
And my musings thou shalt share;
Listen, then, for a few moments,
To the tale I have to tell
Of a merry little maiden,
Beautiful, and good as well.

There lived a little maiden fair,

Not more than three years old;

And she had curly auburn hair

Which shone like purest gold;

And laughing eyes of sunny brown,
As free as heaven from guile;
And every other grace to crown—
Her own sweet baby smile.

But those who knew her, though they prized
The beauty of her mien,
In their dear treasure recognised
A fairer grace unseen;
For if their darling's lovely form
Was precious to the sight,
More precious was the jewel borne
Within the casket bright.

So good was she, that happiness
She gave to every one:
For she had moods of tenderness
As well as sprightly fun;
And though as full of roguish ways
As any woodland elf,
Yet in her very wildest traits
Kindness revealed itself.

So, shedding happiness, like light, Within her favoured home; And giving pleasure to the sight Wherever she might roam; Her own kind heart reaped many joys Goodness alone can earn, For every gift kindness employs Brings pleasure in return.

Ah—you would hear the end, my darling,
Of the pretty little fay;
That as yet I cannot tell you,
For the tale is of to-day;
But I know God will reward her
With all blessings from above,
For such gentle little children
He regards with fondest love.

And one other thing I'll tell you
Of the little maid's career,
That she had a clumsy playmate
Whom she often deigned to cheer;
And in gratitude he promised
His life's object aye should be,
To make happy his dear treasure,
Just, dear, as I live for thee.

EXPECTATION.

Ah, thinks she of the hour,
My darling little fay,
When I shall find my way
Into her nursery bower?

She little recks the haste
With which I onward press,
To meet her dear caress,
And clasp her tiny waist.

Bright vision, false, or true,

Thou art too sweet to me,

To ask, which mayest thou be,
When the answer I might rue;

To rest, I'll be content,
As long as I may dwell
Beneath the happy spell
Which thou, fair hope, hast lent.

But should'st thou pass away,

Like a bright hot-house flower

Chilled in a luckless hour,

And withering in decay:

Then, in thy fate I'll read,

That true love must be taught

To shun each selfish thought,

Ere it may claim its meed;

And schooled by pain's impress, I'll travail with my task, Till, dearest, I can ask, Simply—thy happiness.



FAVOURITE HAUNTS.

'Tis pleasant rural paths to tread,
Where we have never been before,
And onward by their beauty led,
Their secret windings to explore;

To wander freely on the wold,

Now purple with the heather's bloom,

Now yellow, like new burnished gold,

Where furze contends with it for room;

To linger on the dizzy height,

A world of blue in heaven displayed,
And 'neath the feet, the ocean bright
In ever changing tints arrayed;

To rest within the forest green,
Upon a mossy bank of flowers,
And looking on the tranquil scene,
To while away the sultry hours.

Yet nature's charms soon fail to please; For they but lifeless beauty own, And gazing, we learn by degrees That too familiar they have grown. Now you will laugh, no doubt, to hear
The place whither my fancy wends,
The spot which is to me so dear,
That with my dreams it often blends.

It is no rustic lane or dell,

No lawn or garden gay with flowers,
But where the shrieking engines tell

The strain upon their captive powers.

Twas there she leapt into my arms, My darling, whom I'd lost awhile, And kissed away my vague alarms Lest I should miss a welcome smile.

And showed me, that absence had ne'er Estranged her little heart from mine, But given to me a greater share Of what I prize, as gift divine.

And so, since then, I've loved the spot,
Ay, loved the stations' graceless form;
For love, you know, is a despot,
And treats all reasoning with scorn,

SUNSHINE AND SHADOW.

A year had passed, since she was born
A tiny infant child,
And, taking her first look around,
Opened her eyes and smiled.
Bright was that first recurring day
Of our sweet darling's birth,
And cloudless as the summer sky
Was its unchequered mirth.

Ah, then I thought I loved her well,
Our little baby fair,
And happy was I when allowed
The precious charge to bear;
And every playful little cry,
Or half-attempted word,
Was to my ears the sweetest sound
That ever I had heard.

Another year, soon passing by, Brought back the festal day, And showed a dimpled little sprite Able to romp and play; Released from mamma's gentle hold, She gambolled now at will, And rosy lips and pattering feet Were hardly ever still.

And then I thought I loved her well,
For it was my chief joy,
In executing her commands
My leisure to employ;
And every little sign of love
I treasured in my heart,
Deeming only the bliss of Heaven
Could such a bliss impart.

Once more another year had sped
With other years away,
And sunshine filled the outer world,
And everything looked gay;
But darkened was the silent room
Where our heart's sunshine slept,
And while we spake of life and hope
We failed in speech, and wept.

Good God! what worlds of joy or woe Depend upon the thread, Which binds to earth some little one, Tossing on a sick bed. The soul knows its own bitterness
In the anguish of that hour,
And no one else can guess its pain,
Save those who know love's power.

Ah, then I knew how much I loved,
For grief had pierced my heart,
And shown me what my loss would be,
If from her I must part;
But Heaven was gracious to our prayers,—
All thanks for Mercy's boon,—
And as she rose to bless our life
So passed the shadow's gloom.

Darling, we've had some happy years
Since that sad anxious day,
And every year I've loved thee more—
More than my lips can say—
And so I'll love thee, dearest one,
While life and joy remain;
And when I lay me down to die,
Love still shall breathe thy name.

SEPARATION.

It is but a few hours ago
That she was running to and fro,
And making every passage ring
With merry laughter's echoing.

Her toys lie scattered on the floor, Just as she left her little store; And animals from Noah's ark Are ranged like cattle in the park.

Only this morn she placed them there, Pretending that they wanted air, And must be driven their food to seek In pasture-land and shady creek.

But now, no voice will bid them feed In fancy on a flowery mead; A dingy room, is all that's left, Since of her presence 'tis bereft.

Well may the little spaniel pine, And tell me, in his piteous whine, That it's a very evil day Which took his mistress far away. With him I listen still to hear The merry voice which gave us cheer, The bounding step upon the floor, And eager fingers at the door.

And still I wait, and note the time At which she used my knee to climb, And bid me read, or tell a tale, When evening light began to fail.

Such as the room, cold and forlorn, Without her graceful little form, Such is the heart, which, to its cost, Its sole delight and joy has lost.

Yet though we're parted, in my breast My darling's image aye will rest; And this shall now my comfort be, My precious one, to think of thee.

A LABOUR OF LOVE,

No child more loving e'er than she
On doting mother smiled,
Nor could a mother fonder be
Of a dear only child;
And yet to nurse she'd often cling,
When mamma, too, was near,
If any strange unwonted thing
Caused her a moment's fear.

The gentle hand which every day
Had answered to her need,
And proved itself a trusty stay
By many a kindly deed,
It failed not due reward to meet,
When, as its rich return,
It gained the recompense so sweet,
Which only love can earn.

O, for the skill thus to dismiss

Each trouble from her breast,

And soothe her with a furtive kiss

Upon her hands impressed,

And fold her closely to one's heart,

Till hushed were all her cries,

And dewy teardrops ceas'd to start

From her soft lustrous eyes.

For such reward all toil were light,

However long the day,

And watching by her bed at night

The hours would fly away;

Each menial task would sure be sweet,

Thus serving love's behest,

And working in the hope to meet

A recompense so blest.

A sacred charge must that one be,
Which children's nurses bear,
When mothers trust a child like thee,
My darling, to their care;
A charge which gives in tender years
Next to a mother's place,
And to a little heart endears
A serving stranger's face.

Ah, there are many works of love
Which women undertake,
Simply for a reward above,
When they from death shall wake;
But there is one blest toil on earth
Which bears with it its meed:
It is to share the children's mirth,
And tend them in their need.

THE FIRST PANTOMIME.

The clown came on with clumsy leap,
The laughter to engage
Of children, who had come to see
The wonders of the stage;
But our kind little darling sighed
As often as he fell,
And when in mimic pain he cried,
Her teardrops 'gan to swell.

She was too tender-hearted far

To look unmoved on pain,

And though we said 'twas done in sport,

From tears could not refrain;

So from the boisterous scene's display

We took our little pet,

And with a newly-purchased toy

Bid her her fears forget.

O lovely type of souls adorned
By the Creator's hand,
And gifted with the winning grace
Fair pity can command!
God grant the scenes in after life
On which the eye must rest,
May ever find a little heart
As easily impressed.

LOVE.

What power is it, dear little child,
Which arms thy presence with a spell
To make the world seem bright and gay,
And when from thee I am exiled,
O'erclouds the world in which I dwell,
As if its light had passed away?

Is it the beauty of thy face, That, shedding joyous light around, Makes this appear a fairy scene, And clothes each object with a grace Which in itself cannot be found, Being but a reflected gleam?

Is it the beauty of thy soul,
Which God created pure and fair
In the blest sphere beyond the skies;
Is this the power that can control
The senses, and can make them share
Such bliss as angels well might prize?

Ah, the fair beauty of thy form
Lends loveliness unto each spot
Where thou dost play; and grace of soul
Helps with its beauty to adorn
Thy pretty ways: yet this is not
Thy secret power's constraining whole.

The air thou breathest, it is sweet,
Because love is a fragrant flower,
And breathes its sweets when thou art near;
And in the place of thy retreat
Blossoms alway a sunny bower,
For love could make a hovel dear.

This is the power which can transform The outer world and hidden soul, With golden light and joyous thrill; For love in the high heaven was born, And hence it is the only goal Able our being's void to fill.



FRIENDS IN NEED.

One half my life, I live again
The happiness which blessed each hour
When thou, darling, wast by my side;
For though such joy might not abide,
It lingers, as in April shower
The sunshine lingers in the rain.

The other half in dreams I spend, Looking unto the happy day When I again shall see thy face; And hope, instilled by Heaven's grace, Has power the throbbings to allay Which otherwise my soul would rend.

Thus past and future have combined
To shroud the present with a veil,
Which lulls the heart to dreamy peace;
And like kind sleep—which gives release
To those whom many pains assail—
In sweet delusion steeps the mind.

Ah, fleeting were each joy indeed,
If in fair dreams it were not ours
Long after it has been withdrawn;
And what could solace those who mourn,
If hope assumed not brighter hours
Were coming with their golden meed?

As kindest friends, then, should we hail The memories past years beget, And hopes, which future years enshrine; 'Tis Heaven that in mercy Divine, Bids us with these good friends forget The present we so oft bewail.



WINTER.

The northern wind is blowing cold, As cold as well may be,
And with a dismal howl it sweeps
Across the darkened lea;
But warmly curtained is the door
And nursery window pane;
So let the wind blow as it will,
It howls and blows in vain.

The drizzling mist borne on the blast In falling turns to ice,
And beating on the window glass
Forms many a strange device;
But on the hearth the yule-log burns
With bright and ruddy glow,
And in its crackling seems to laugh
At winter rain and snow.

It laughs, and flickers on the wall, And winks its jolly eyes,
As if to say—here is a hearth
Just fit for such a prize;
No stately fireside would I grace,
No ball-room, grand and gay;
But, on a cosy room like this
My kindliest beams must play.

And with its crackling blends a voice, So merry and so sweet,
That the old log may well rejoice
Such cheery tones to meet;
And in its glow a little child
Is dancing here and there,
And well may it with kindliest gleam
Shine on a form so fair.

Ah yes, the northern wind may blow As madly as it will, And sleet and rain may beat upon The nursery window sill; No summer eve, in beauty calm, Can boast serener light, Than claims the glowing nursery log For the dark winter's night.

And heavier storms might gather o'er The house upon the lea,
And yet be powerless to disturb
Its harmless mirth and glee;
Within it dwells a talisman
Against the world's annoy,
And now the secret I have told
Of its unfailing joy

A BEGGAR.

A beggar, I stand at the door, And for a largess I pray, A largess I humbly implore, To help me along life's way.

Ah wilt thou not hear the request I would fain lay at thy feet; Sure, pity will wake in thy breast, When my heart's prayer I repeat.

I ask of thy fair little face,
Which might a child angel's be,
To show to the suppliant a trace
Of the welcome he longs to see.

I ask of thy soft little hand
A moment in mine to rest,
Till love thou cans't not understand
Has left its fond kiss impressed.

I ask of thy tender young heart, So guileless and free from care, To bid me, ere I must depart, Receive of its wealth a share. So little will make me content,
In the dull pathway I tread,
Thou never wilt feel thou has spent
The joy which thy alms gifts shed.

And, if I've too greedily built
Hope's airy castles to-day,
Then grant me whatever thou wilt,
To help me along life's way.

Ah, wilt thou not hear my request, And grant me the boon I seek; Sure, pity awakes in thy breast, And thy heart to mine will speak!

A VAIN ATTEMPT.

Fair is the glorious sun by day,
And silvery moon at night;
And when its beams have ceased to play,
The heaven with stars bedight;
But fairer than the heavenly ray
Is thine eyes' joyous light.

Fair is the softly moulded form
Of fleecy clouds on high,
Which gather on a summer morn
To deck the radiant sky;
But fairer beauty lines adorn
The earth, when thou art nigh.

Fair is the movement of the breeze
Which stirs the placid air,
And dances on the summer seas,
And frolics everywhere;
But lovelier is the graceful ease
Which all thy movements bear.

And so, darling, I will no more
Attempt a rash essay;
I've counted Nature's treasures o'er
Thy likeness to portray,
And they all pale—as night before
The fairer charms of day.

DESPOTISM.

Despotic rule has very few
To praise it in our day,
It is a relic of the times
That now have passed away;
And yet an autocratic power
I cheerfully obey,
Yielding unto my fairy Queen
An undisputed sway.

There must be some magician's spell In her dear baby voice,
For what she bids, I execute
As if it were my choice;
And when in an exacting mood
My time she all employs,
Tis then beneath my tyrant's yoke
That chiefly I rejoice.

Perhaps I yield so readily,
Soon as her wish I know,
Because the service she demands
A liking seems to show;
And, to be liked by such a fay,
I gladly would forego
All other joys the happiest life
Could offer to bestow.

Let it be how it will, there is
No voice in her domain
To sigh after the liberty
The demagogues proclaim;
And I will own despotic rule
Has banished many a pain,
And filled the palace of my queen
With blessings on her name.



OFFERINGS.

I offer thee my waking thoughts,
For they are all thine own,
They're shadows of the childish sports
Which cheer thy happy home;
And as thy shadow softly glides
Along the sunny way,
'Tis even so my thought abides
With thee throughout the day.

I offer thee my slumbers' dreams,
For they likewise are thine,
They're mirrors whence my spirit gleans
The joys of bygone time;
And as upon each mirror's face
Thou see'st, darling, thine own,
So, in my dreams, I ever trace
One precious form alone.

I offer thee my earnest prayers,
For they also are thine,.
They're echoes from the purer airs
Of thy soul's fairer clime;
And as the echoes constant theme
Repeats itself again,
So, when in prayer I humbly lean,
I ever breathe thy name.

Darling, I lay these offerings three
At thy dear little feet,
For in them thou mayest chance to see
The love that strives to speak;
And if they can but show a part
Of what I long to tell,
I know thou wilt not have the heart
My poor gifts to repel.



QUESTIONING.

The brightness of the early dawn Too often passes by,
Leaving a cloudy sky:
Ah, darling! shall I ever mourn
The loss of childish grace
In thy bright happy face;
And say, alas, the charm is gone.

The beauty of the tender bloom Too often fades away, After an hour's display: Ah, darling, can it be that soon Thy beauty will have fled, With all the joys it shed, And left me to bewail its doom.

Nay, though each year I deemed thee fair, So fair, that I would fain Have had thee thus remain; Yet every year has seemed to bear Fresh beauties to thy face, Leaving untouched the grace Which I so fondly treasured there.

And so, darling, I'll banish fears, Lest with advancing time Thy beauty should decline; For as thy baby grace endears, In childhood, beauty's ray, So shall I trace alway The simple charm of early years.



HEART-READING.

When in my arms I held thee, dear, In the new joy of thy first year, It grieved me that I had no store Of graceful tricks love to secure:

Yet thou seemed'st e'en then to know The love I vainly sought to show, For patiently thou would'st abide, While to amuse my best I tried.

Again it grieved me, when I found As years in seasons went their round, That I was lacking more each day In skill to join thy childish play.

Yet love by thee was still discerned, And so thy awkward playmate learned To bear a part in every game, As if he were a child again.

Ah, did'st thou know, thy presence lent To every spot thou did'st frequent, A charm, nature or human art Had ne'er been able to impart? And that the walls of thine abode
To me palatial splendour showed,
Because 'twas happiness to be
Under the roof that sheltered thee?

And did'st thou know, the very air Which played about thy curly hair, For me was laden with perfume More fragrant than the rose's bloom?

And that 'twas sweeter than the flowers Of any garden's scented bowers, Because I then was nearest thee, And this was joy of joys to me?

Ah, darling, thou could'st hardly know The fervour of my passion's glow, For children from their elders earn A love angels could scarce return:

And on their part, they can but feel A tithe of the fond love they steal; Just as we may in shadowy form Perceive the first outlines of dawn.

The greater therefore, dear, must be The gratitude I owe to thee; Because thou did'st but know a part Of the great love within my heart. And yet to me thou wert as kind, As if the love my heart enshrined, Had been from its mute prison freed, To plead, as it has longed to plead.



L' ADIEU.

How cold the parting seemed,
The last kiss and farewell,
When from thy sight I screened
The tears that fell;
And with a nervous haste
Sought solitude's relief,
Lest I should be disgraced
By foolish grief.

O could I once more look,
My precious one, on thee,
Then better I might brook
Stern fate's decree;
That moment would restore
Such gladness to my sight,
That I should never more
Lose its delight.

O could I once more hear
Thy lips pronounce my name,
'Twould fill my wistful ear
With joy again;
And when forced to depart,
My soul would yet enshrine
A message from thy heart,
Darling, to mine.

Alas, 'tis vain I know
For such a boon to pray,
Its joy I must forego
For many a day;
And each long hour's space
Will seem an age to me,
Until I can retrace
My steps to thee.

GENEROSITY.

There is a love so fond and true,
'Tis like the heavens of cloudless blue;
Its wondrous depth no voice can say,
And changeless, it is calm as they.

Such is the love for thee, dear child, Which with devotion has beguiled Each tedious hour of infant pain, And joyed to see thee well again.

Ah, who can tell the rapture's bliss With which she met thy baby kiss, And in thy sweet awakening love, Tasted a joy, all joys above.

And yet without a jealous thought, My darling, thou by her wast taught To give what was to her so dear, Unto a heart which waited near.

And when to others thou would'st stray, Choosing rather with them to play, No shadow could I ever trace Marring the calmness of her face. Ah, love, when of its prize 'tis sure, May laugh at envy, and endure To see the dear one stray awhile, But to return with fonder smile.

Nevertheless, praised be the heart Which deigns its own joy to impart, And shows a generous love, unknown, Save unto mother's hearts alone.



UNKNOWN.

Angels alone now see the grace
In which thou dost excel,
And guessing what will be thy face,
Already love it well.

But though, dear babe, thou art unknown
Where we in exile dwell,
Yet in thy spirit's secret home,
Darling, I love thee well.

Thou mayest be like the Saxon child, Once led from Roman cell, Whose beauty, vowed the Pontiff mild, Bondage should ne'er dispel;

Thou mayest be like the babes I've seen
Where scorching sunbeams fell,
With dark bright eyes, and roguish gleam
Dull sleep could hardly quell:

Thou mayest be girl, thou mayest be boy,
As yet I cannot tell,
I only know thou art my joy,
I love thee, dear, so well;

And should it chance that others see
No grace in thee, ma belle,
Yet beautiful thou still wilt be,
To one who loves thee well.

Accept then, little babe, above, Where angel voices swell, The humble tribute of a love That loves thee dearly well,

And when thou visitest the earth,
Allured by love's sweet spell,
Darling, how shall I hail thy birth—
And love thee—ah, so well!



AFTER WORK.

There's pleasure yet, for many a one,
Who in the strife
Of toiling life
Must needs each costly pleasure shun;
For when the daily task is done,
The workmen wend
Their way to spend
The hours of peace they've justly won.

And then no pleasure could be found
So dearly sweet,
As when they meet
Their children's joyous welcome bound;
Nor could a blither music sound,
Than that they hear,
Afar and near,
While happy children play around.

Beauty too—where is there a sight That could entrance
A father's glance
With such a measure of delight?
Each little one seems to unite
All that our eyes
Are wont to prize
In children's faces pure and bright.

Ah yes, their toil they well may bear, Who can repose
At even's close,
And to such happiness repair;
No wealth can purchase joys so fair
As workmen own,
Who have a home,
And little children waiting there.

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A SKETCH.

His face was such as may be seen In pictures of the Holy Child, Where Deger realized the dream Of Heaven's beauty undefiled; And showed in the inspired mien, That God on earth was domiciled.

A diadem of glowing ore
Shone in the locks around his head;
A halo, like the Saviour wore
In sight of angels, as they sped
To welcome Him and to adore,
Beside the lowly manger bed.

Softly the blush upon his cheeks
Was tinted on the ivory skin,
As when the mountain's snowy peaks
First faintly flush, and so begin,
With delicately painted streaks,
To own the dawn's awakening.

His coral lips in form displayed A varied beauty every hour, As dimpling smiles upon them played, And parted them, like opening flower; With such a smile was Christ arrayed, When nursed in gentle Mary's bower. So lucid were his eyes, so bright,
Like a deep crystal; and in hue,
The violets dear to the sight
Are not so lovely in their blue;
The Heaven-born soul spoke in their light,
Recalling Mary's Child anew.



A FANCY.

At a poor travelling show,
Where children go
To see the circus rider's skill,
I marked a child's delight,
Brought to the sight,
A promised treat perhaps to fulfil.

At first she gazed in awe
At all she saw;
But soon grown tired, she turned away,
And with a stranger nigh
Began to try
Some of her baby games of play.

I know not by what art
She read the heart,
But unrestrained by timid fear,
She climbed upon his knee,
As bold and free
As if each child to him were dear

With such a trustful love,
Fair babes above
May perhaps the ransomed spirits meet;
And when we've left the earth,
In our new birth,
Such kindly welcome may repeat.

O Heaven in mercy give
The grace to live
So that we may this joy attain;
If nothing else were ours
In thy fair bowers,
Still all-sufficient were the gain.



RECOLLECTION.

A little child once played beside The flowing and the ebbing tide, And merrily passed the hours away, For it was his life's holiday.

Exciting sport it was for him
To paddle on the ocean's brim,
Escaping from each crested wave
Which roughly sought his feet to lave.

And treasures, he had loads of them, When every pool contained a gem,— A limpet, perhaps, or muscle shell, Or seaweed, which pleased him as well.

Ambitious, too, his schemes were grand. For building castles on the sand;
Nor had he thoughtfulness to weep
Over the daily levelled keep.

A boy once played upon the shore, Thinking of golden days in store, And wishing for the time to come When his successes should be won. Foremost amid the battle's fray Would he pursue his headlong way Unto the standard of the foe, And thus a dauntless courage show.

Or else upon the stormy sea
He'd be a sailor bold and free,
And with a gallant ship his own,
Would find some land as yet unknown.

No further cared he then to read The future life of thought and deed; He d drawn in fancy what he prized, Nor in the lottery blanks surmised.

A man in weariness reposed Upon the shore as even closed, And listened to the careless glee Of children playing by the sea.

Alas! the treasures he had sought, How soon he'd found that they were nought; And castles towering to the sky, They all had vanished with a sigh.

As fleeting, too, had been the dream Which boyhood lent unto the scene; There is for each a battle's fray, But few are those who win the day.

Thus musing, lingered he to hear The children's voices playing near— Voices from the far distant past, Destined to bring him peace at last.

Still child enough was he to yearn For innocence's sweet return, And beg for such a humble heart As might renewing grace impart.

And he was still enough a boy
To look in hope for future joy;
For joy of souls, absolved and blessed
By penance and by sin confessed.

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HIDDEN.

A sunny shower of golden hair,
A little form surpassing fair,
Soft wondering eyes that matched in blue
The Italian skies of azure hue,
And features of as sweet a grace
As any child of noble race.

Twas sad to see her trip away
Through fields of bricks and spongy clay,
Until within the region lone
She found a poor and dirty home,
Where sickness with hard want combined
To stunt the frame and warp the mind.

Tis thus the fairest flowers hide, Concealed upon the mountain side; The alpen rose displays its bloom On rugged steeps of cheerless gloom; The daphne, with its fragrant scent Is crevassed where the rocks are rent; And on the dreary ridge's crest Thy lovely gentian finds its rest.

O God! what means this lavish waste Of sweets forbidden to the taste? Must gems of beauty droop and die Unknown, unseen by mortal eye? Must lovely children learn to soil
Their dimpled hands with vulgar toil,
And live, perhaps, to share the sin
Of drunken brawls' discordant din;
Or prematurely sink in death,
Destroyed by fever's tainted breath?
Ah, hush!—the will of Heaven is best,
However dark seems its behest;
God's mercy yet will claim His own,
And lead them to a happy home,
Where beauty lost to sight on earth
May bloom again in second birth.



RESCUED.

In the outskirts of a city, Where the vagrants hide at night, And the squalid houses fitly Represent their inmates' plight, A poor little child was lying, Tried by sickness and by pain, The parochial leech applying All his remedies in vain. There was nothing much to cheer him In the dimly-lighted room; No bright toys and playthings near him Helped to liven up its gloom; No gay sunshine pierced the shadow Which within the cellar reigned, The space was too deep and narrow, Fronting windows dirt bestained.

Long and wearisome the hours

Which lagged slowly through the day,
And his tears, like April showers,
Freely coursed and passed away,
Leaving him such consolation
As poor little sufferers meet,
When they cry in desolation
Till they cry themselves to sleep.

But it mattered not—none heeded
How the little patient fared;
Why he cried or what he needed,
No one asked and no one cared.
No father had ever owned him
With a parent's proud delight,
And his mother, she bemoaned him,
For he brought her shame to light;
Yet she would have gently tended
The sick child all day alone,
Had she not worked unbefriended
To provide the wretched home.

Now the days of reckless sinning
Had begun to tell their tale
In the form, that, slowly sinking,
Waxed more slender and more frail;
And each day she grew more weary
Of her wretched, hopeless life;
Past and future both were dreary,
With regrets and bodings rife.
Then his patient love revealing,
Came the poor neglected child,
And his hand into her's stealing,
Clung to her, the much defiled;

And love proved that it was stronger
Than the guilty ban of years;
Hardened she remained no longer,
As she showed by humble tears.

One more night of struggled breathing, One more night of troubled rest, And the world that she was leaving Woke again, with sunshine blest. "Mamma, you sleep long this morning," The child whispered in her ear, Heedless of the silent warning Which her pallid face made clear. It was true she slept, and sounder Than the poor boy's mind could grasp, For a chilly hand had bound her, And her soul had fled at last: And the child soon followed, passing From a vale of tears away, One fond look on mamma casting Ere his eyes were closed for aye.

Thus two spirits homeward wended
Through the shades of death to light;
One was pure, and one attended,
Dear to pitying angels' sight.

FLOWERS AMONG THORNS.

In the most wretched courts and streets,
Where drunkards stagger by,
And shameless women congregate
All virtue to defy,
There, heedless of their misery,
The little children play,
And for their sake kind Heaven seems
Its vengeance to delay.

You'll see them. as you pass along
The filthy alley's shade,
Playing with an old paste-board box
Into a carriage made;
Or with some bits of broken glass
(Their plaything's scanty store),
And with the rest of amateurs
Counting their treasures o'er.

And there they laugh as merrily
As though they had at home
The comfort and the fostering love
Which they have never known;
And spite of the great difference
'Twixt children rich and poor,
They have the same dear winning tricks
Which love must aye secure.

Then follow them into the dens
Where they their shelter seek,
When pouring rain or winter's cold
Has forced them from the street;
There you will find the well-known charm
Which makes your home so dear,
Although each guileless little face
All grimy must appear.

Their delicate soft little feet
Come pattering along,
While groping in the dark you seek
The room where they belong;
And dimpled little fingers seize
Your coat or walking-stick
Before you can discern a form
In atmosphere so thick.

Then, when you're seated on the wreck
Of an old kitchen chair,
Their dirty rags, tied up with string,
As dollies they will bear;
And seeking an admiring glance,
They'll place them in your hand.
With a half-serious look, that says—
"You surely think them grand."

And they will rest so trustingly
Their elbows on your knee,
That though unwashed and clothed in rags,
Their beauty you will see;
And while you look into their eyes
So innocent and bright,
Both love and pity must awake
In thinking of their plight.

Ah, Heaven has sprinkled lavishly
Its tender little flowers,
Even beneath the darkest cloud
Which o'er the city lowers;
Sweet buds they are of Paradise,
Sweet types of Eden's grace,
But soon the thorns of cursed earth
Their beauty will deface.

Surely, where there is pity left.
An effort should be made
To rescue these dear little ones
From sin's corroding shade;
And while we strive, may innocence
Plead earnestly for them—
More earnestly than we can plead—
Who've lost that priceless gem.

AMONG THE DAISIES.

Where the humble daisies grow,
Sprinkled like soft falling snow,
On a sward of tender green,
There in slumber's peace serene
Lie the little babes at rest—
Sleeping, as upon the breast
Of a mother once they slept,
When her loving watch she kept.

Some in luxury were born

Noble mansions to adorn,

And within their princely home

Love's indulgence aye was prone

Every wish to gratify;

So that to an infant's eye

Their bright nursery might seem

The charmed land of childish dream.

Some of them were very poor, And were taught want to endure Ere they yet had learned the play Which belongs to childhood's day; But a love, as fond and true As the nobler parents knew, All its fondness on them shel, In its struggle for their bread. Some enriched by every grace
Of a pretty childish face,
Had soft curly locks of hair,
And bright eyes, and cheeks more fair
Than the fairest dame at court;
And justly their parents thought
That each dimpled little elf
Was beauty's incarnate self.

Some, again, poor little mites,
From their birth were piteous sights,
And before twelve months were told
They looked prematurely old;
Yet these blighted buds were dear
To the parents watching near—
Dear as if each babe had grown
Fairest of the joys of home.

Now beneath the mossy turf
Lie these little flowers of earth;
Poor or rich. alike they own
One soft cradle and one home;
And whether the cheek was fair,
Or distressed by look of care,
Soothing sleep has quite erased
Every line sickness had traced.

But the little daisies say
That the babes will rise one day;
That as slumbering germs of life
Blossom when the seed is rife,
So each babe in mossy nest
Will awaken from its rest,
And within a little while
Wear the dear familiar smile.

See, the daisy's snowy leaf
Tells the heart burdened with grief
How lovely children will be,
Garnered thus in purity;
And the wealth the daisies hold
In their centre's yellow gold
Speaks of treasures which ere long
To each baby will belong.

Nor may we unsolaced weep At the children's heavy sleep, For while daisies strew the green, Starry types in heaven are seen— Types of little spirits fair Which are fondly cherished there; And in their bright home above They know all our passionate love.

SPRING.

See the sun is shining brightly
Through the leafy veil o'erhead;
Stealing through the soft green curtain
Downward to the mossy bed,
Where the rivulet's low murmur
Tells that winter storms have fled.

Flowers have donned the gay apparel
Of the spring-time's brightest hue,
Vieing with the rainbow's glory,
In their gold, and red and blue;
'Neath each tree they lie in clusters,
Courting every passer's view.

How much fairer is the beauty
Of the summer's infant days,
Than the later robe of splendour
We behold with languid gaze,
When the fruits begin to ripen
'Neath the sunbeam's scorching rays.

Will the full-blown flowers be lovely,
As the buds which deck the lawn,
When they have attained the fulness
Of their colour and their form;
And we wait their leaflets falling,
With the dew-drops of the morn?

Will the winds breathe such a fragrance
As is wafted on the air,
When the early blossoms fading,
Leave the tangled branches bare;
And lie stained by the corruption,
Which their beauty will not spare?

Will the birds sing on as blithely,
When the little ones have flown;
When the young have left their shelter,
Feeling that too big they've grown
For the circling flights attempted
Round their mother's downy home?

Nay, the course of nature teaches
How the happy moments fly;
How within the stately forest
All the flowers will withered lie;
And how all the hopes we cherish,
Quickly bloom, and quickly die.

BONSECOURS.

On the hills there is a village,
On the heights above the Seine,
Where the woods are green and pleasant,
And rich orchards bound the lane;

Petted it has been by nature;
And the cottagers, with pride,
Tell you how its fertile beauty
Has been praised both far and wide.

And they love it, just as dearly

For its name's sake, as its grace;

For they say the name of promise

Brings good fortune to the place.

"Bonsecour (say young folks gaily)
Is the cradle of our birth;
Never pine, but wait the morrow;
It will bring thee joy and mirth."

And old men and women, sighing Over some stern bitter past; Say, "Bonsecour is our village, Dark days will not always last." Thus the young and old conversing,
Ere they seek well-earned repose,
Whisper first the name that cheers them
With new hope at twilight's close.

But a boon to him more precious, Is the simple peasant's theme, As he leads the stranger onward, Past the merry village green.

To the precipice he guides him, To the edge of the great rock, Where our Lady's chapel rises, And the pastor greets his flock.

There the tablets round the altar,
Tell of mighty wonders done,
By the gracious help of Mary,
And the power of her Son.

Mothers there have laid their infants When the hand of death was near; And the children, once more smiling, Have dismissed their parents' fear.

Thither have the blind resorted,
And the paralyzed been borne,
And the withered limbs have gathered
Strength their labours to perform.

Fathers, mothers, wives and children,
All alike the goodness own
Of our Lady of Bonsecour,
In the records cut in stone.

Gracious Lady! shield thy people
Ever with such gentle care;
Guard the tender little children,
And the erring sinner spare:

In thy pity and compassion,

Look upon the sick and poor;

As they kneel before thee, crying,

"Notre Dame de Bonsecour."



NOTRE DAME DE LA GARDE.

Notre Dame de la Garde
Is built on a rock,
Torn away from the cliffs
By some mighty shock;
It looks o'er a harbour,
A city, and plain,
And then, turning southward,
Surveys the dark main.

No flowers are blooming
In beauty and pride,
No verdure enlivens
The rock's stony side;
But sunshine is dancing
Upon the blue sea,
And white waves are chasing
Each other in glee.

The holiday people
Are looking their best,
The young bent on pleasure,
The old seeking rest;
And thus all is gladness,
Although but last night
A storm raged with fury
In its awful might.

The sun that is shining
So brightly to-day,
Sank into the ocean
With lowering ray;
And ere the night shadows
Had darkened the earth,
The glare of the lightning
Was seen on the surf.

Alas, for the women
Who waited in fear,
While darkness grew thicker,
And blasts more severe;
Full long had they rested
Upon the bent knee,
If they had but witnessed
The wild work at sea.

But that is all over,
At chapel to-day
The women and children
Their offerings pay;
Fresh gifts deck the altar,
And one little boat
Hangs down from the ceiling,
Their thanks to denote.

And as the sweet incense
Is wafted on high.
The vows of two seamen
Ascend to the sky:
No words that are uttered,
They feel can requite
A life's preservation,
And their home's delight.

O Mary, our Helper
In moments of need:
Our kind Intercessor.
By Heaven decreed;
How of: has thy succour
Lest wanderers borne,
In safety through danger.
When hope seemed forlorn.

The sailors' sure Refuge,
Thy silelter we claim,
As oft as we traverse
The dark stormy main;
Blest Mother of Jesus!
Hear thou our request,
And show us the haven
Of joy and of rest.

BENEDETTA.

In a mountain-girded valley,
Flanked by peaks of snowy whiteness,
Rise the mossy hills that circle
Round the Pyrenean village;
Rise the stone pines and the larches,
With their russet stems and branches
Plumed in dark or tender verdure,
Stately sentries of the hamlet.

Should you chance to travel thither, Seeking pleasure or refreshment, Pause awhile, to hear the story Of the little Benedetta; Of the guileless little maiden, Born of parents poor and simple, In the rocky mountain valley, In the homely little village.

She was playing by the river,
By the grotto 'neath the larches,
When, one day, a lovely lady
Seemed awhile to stand before her;
Never had majestic beauty
Dazzled eyesight with such splendour,

Never had divine compassion
Dwelt in look so sweet and tender,
Never had the grace of Heaven
Shone in image or in picture,
Such as when the lovely lady
Turned to little Benedetta.

Many times then came the maiden
To the grotto by the river;
And she saw the radiant vision
Of the Lady of the Grotto;
Listened to her voice of music,
Listened to the word she uttered;
And like wind at even sighing
Through the stately pines and larches,
Came the voice, which in its music,
Gave this charge to Benedetta—
"Tell my priests to be the preachers

Of repentance to the people;
And here let a church be founded,
To the Lady of the Grotto."

Then as in the barren desert, Grateful to the thirsty people, Flowed the life reviving waters, At the holy prophet's bidding; So a fountain—wondrous token— From unsmitten rocks descended, Stealing like a line of crystal Down the Grotto's rocky paving, Down the mossy banks and meadows, Till it plunged into the river.

And each day were told new wonders Of the fountain's crystal water; Of its power to raise the feeble From their long unquitted couches; Of its power to stay the fever In its keen and greedy burning; And to give back youthful vigour In exchange for pallid sickness. So each year the promised chapel Grew more stately in dimensions; Built in faith by grateful pilgrims, Who had prayed and been rewarded; An l in many a costly temple, Far off from the mountain valley, Rose new altars, dedicated To the Lady of the Grotto.

List' now to the river's message As it hastens towards the ocean; As it ripples on the pebbles, Lending music to the summer, Or in wilder mood careering, Dashes down the stormy rapid. Those who fain would be exalted, And would seek eternal wisdom, Let them learn of Benedetta
To be gentle, pure, and lowly;
Of such is the blessed kingdom
Of the Father the Creator,
Such, too, are the happy children
Owned by Jesus the Redeemer;
Mary loves them, saith the river,
As it passes to the ocean.



AVE MARIA.

As the children in awaking
Seek their parents' fond caress,
Confident of eager welcome,
And of lavish tenderness;
So at dawn, an Ave's greeting
To our Mother I'll address.

As the lover to the maiden
Breathes the oft-repeated tale,
Pleading with impassioned ardour
For a love that will not fail;
Thus I'll kneel at Mary's altar,
Till my mid-day prayers avail.

As the pilgrim rests at even,
Gazing wistful towards the sky;
So I'll linger in the gloaming,
Till our Lady hears my cry;
Looking up from earth to heaven,
Whither fain the soul would fly.

There I'll picture the fruition
Of the Blesséd in their home,
Gathered with the angel spirits
Round our Lady's starry throne:
Till in musing on their gladness,
It becomes awhile my own.

HYMN.

Holy Virgin, God's dear Mother,
Mother, too, to me by grace;
Patroness, to whose protection
God has given a sinful race;
See with what a trust confiding
Thy compassion's pledge I meet,
Casting down a life-long burden
At my tender Mother's feet.

Be to me, O Queen of Heaven,
Refuge sure, in times of woe;
If distress and care o'erwhelm me,
Deign thy mercy then to show;
Be to me my consolation,
Should my body writhe in pain;
Soothe me with divine refreshment,
Till I am at ease again.

And I'll ask the greatest favour,
In the closing of my prayer;
Plead for me, to Jesus lying
On thy bosom pure and fair;
As He smiles in balmy slumber
Whisper all my guilty fear;
Be my Advocate, O Mother,
Now—and when death's hour is near.

SALVE REGINA.

Queen of Heaven, we bow before Thee, Crowned above the starry skies; And in mercy we implore Thee, Turn to us those pitying eyes.

Ah, canst Thou behold us reaping
Bitter fruits of tears and woe,
And not hush our mournful weeping
With the hope Thou canst bestow?

Nay, in our sad exile, Mother, Thou wilt listen to our prayer; For Thou knowest there is no other Who can raise us from despair.

Show us then, our Hope's salvation, Jesus, Thy sweet Holy Child, That we may with adoration Worship loveliness so mild.

Show us how dearly He loves Thee,
As He nestles at Thy breast;
"Tis a pledge that He will hear Thee,
Whatsoe'er Thou dost request.

Show us too, that though unworthy,
We are pitied—loved by Him—
And that you bright kingdom's glory,
By His grace we yet may win.

Hear, O hear us, gentle Mother, List' now to the exile's prayer; Hear us, for unto no other Eva's children can repair.

-- (M) ----

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL.

The jewels of the starry night, Too numerous to tell. Have each of them a special grace. If we could scan them well: And even so amongst the saints, In whom love shines serene, Each happy soul in glory sheds Some bright unrivalled beam. In one the martyr's courage glows, Another bears the palm, Awarded to the virgin bands Who kept their peerless charm; And others fought in heathen lands The battles of their Lord. And thus obtained a blessed crown In token of reward.

But see, amid the radiant host,
There is one gentle light,
Which shines with pity's tender ray
Most excellently bright;
St. Vincent is the name that sheds
This pure and holy beam;
And pity for Christ's little ones
Gave it its kindly gleam.

He saw them left to wretched crones. Who coldly watched them die, As heedless as King Herod's men Of the poor children's cry; And anger stirred within his soul At such a cruel sight, While love, with its more potent spell, Strove to maintain their right. Henceforth, alone, he'd often pace The streets, until he found Some infant no one deigned to own, Cast out upon the ground; And he would fold the little one So softly to his breast, A father's and a mother's care In him were both expressed.

For these he quickly raised a home,
Where food and warmth were given;
And gentle nurses tended them,
Who had been vowed to Heaven.
But harder times were drawing near,
For famine scourged the land,
And stood with its ill-omened frown
Confronting Vincent's band;
Then some began to lose their zeal
For Vincent's cherished scheme,
And said, we can no longer strive
To realise his dream;

Until at length a rumour ran,

"The home will soon be closed;
The patrons to maintain its cost
No longer are disposed."
And so a meeting was convened
Within the council hall,
To say if charity would give,
Or if the home must fall.

Or if the home must fall.

The zealous sighed when Vincent rose
To speak the final word,

For of his prudence every one
Ere this had often heard;

They knew not how the saint had knelt
All through the weary night,

Asking of God to clear his doubt,
And give him surer light;

They knew not yet the confidence
Which saintly prayers impart,

When Vincent paused to gather breath
And spake with kindling heart:

"Thanks, noble patrons, ladies kind,
And to the sisters all,
Who have responded to my prayer,
And to the children's call;
The sacrifices you have made
The homeless to sustain,
A failure in o'erwhelming need
Will never brand as vain.

Yet ere the final vote is passed, I pray you contemplate The end of helpless infancy Abandoned to its fate. Remember once the Infant Christ Was cast upon the wild; For people spurned the wanderers, The Mother, and her Child; And think you that your charity Such deed could not have done? That Mary you had ne'er refused With her dear little One? Then listen to her gentle voice, Re-echoed in the prayer Which rises from the trembling lips Of children in your care; You know how fondly she must gaze Upon each baby face; What father's or what mother's heart Enshrines no tender place! Unto this love I now confide The question of to-day; And God will surely save the home For which the children pray." The Saint's firm earnest look was raised In mute appeal to Heaven,

While he besought that holier power Might to his words be given;

Then on all sides was heard the cry
Of one united heart,
"Father, the children shall be saved,
From them we will not part."
And ever since that anxious day
The home has flourished well,
God gave the sustenance required,
And made its barns to swell;
And happy children fill its courts,
All innocent and fair,
Whilst Vincent at God's mercy seat
Still offers up his prayer.

Now when at night you watch a star More tender than the rest,
Think of St. Vincent's gentle heart
And love for the distressed;
And let his love arouse your soul,
To hear the feeble cry
Of little children, left by guilt
To suffer, and to die.

LOST SANCTUARIES.

A sorry thing it is to see
A Holy Shrine's decay,
And think how its religious pomp
With time has passed away.

The roofless chapel, broken down
By sacrilegious hands,
Was once a noted place for prayer,
A home for pilgrim bands.

And at the altar stood the priest, In jewelled cope arrayed, Conferring sacred benison, While he the Host displayed.

But long since this has passed away
Like visions in a dream,
And now the altar is o'erthrown,
And buried 'neath the green.

What must the Holy Martyrs think,
Who once in Heaven bent low,
To listen to the pilgrim's tale
Of sinfulness and woe!

The fickleness they well may chide
Which centuries confess,
In treating them devoutly first,
Then with such carelessness.

But let it be—'tis better thus,
Than that within the Fane
The faithless should their heresy
Exultingly proclaim;

'Tis better that the altar stone,
Trampled beneath the ground,
Should hide itself from human sight,
Than to false rites be bound.

O weep for such a shrine as that, Ye blessed Saints above, Weep for it ye who once bestowed On it the toil of love;

Weep for it as the Jewish band, In Babylon exiled, Wept for their lost Jerusalem, And Temple's courts defiled.

Yet there are shrines to Heaven more dear Than any made by hands; God sees their ruins everywhere In the most Christian lands. And strange to say, but little care

For these lost ones is felt,

Though once they were the favoured shrines

Where God's blest Spirit dwelt.

'Tis true they lack each beauty's trace, Seen in the crumbling pile, For nature to the stone is kind, And deigns on it to smile.

She plants its walls with moss and fern And many a floweret gay, On it the golden sunsets rest, And silvery moonbeams play.

Yet once, bethink you, they were fair,
These temples made by God,
And richly furnished with His grace
The way of life they trod;

E'en Judas once with children played, Himself a baby child, And they were such, as he was then, Ere sin each sense beguiled.

Ah, pray for these, ye pitying Saints,
That they may be restored;
Pray for the Spirit's ruined shrine
Where God is not adored;

And pray for them, ye penitents, Who've tasted Jesus' love; A noble work will then be yours, When chronicled above.



CHANGE.

All things change beneath the sky,
And with them we change each day;
First fair childhood going by,
Leaves its happy hours of play;
Then the youthful, with a sigh,
Hurry on towards decay;
And the aged soon will lie
With the sleepers passed away.
Yet though nothing meets the eye,
Save a shifting scene's array,
There is one thing can defy
Cruel Time's relentless sway:
Love, if true, will never die;
It will live unchanged for aye.

PASSÉ.

What used to be, but cannot be again, How dear it is, and yet how full of pain; What sweet delights are wakened by its days, And yet what grief the happy bygones raise; 'Tis hard to say, whether it were not best, Forgetting all, to let it sink to rest.

Most wise, perhaps, and manly it would be, To shun the past and bid the weakness flee; To scorn its joys and bid them all depart, Disowning pain, e'en while it chills the heart; But who can loose the fetters that are born By those who love the very grief they mourn.

Ah, be itmine the captive's life to share,

To clothe the past once more in colours fair;

Kind fancy still may prove a constant friend.

And soothe the smarts that with its pleasures blend—

I'd rather choose to dwell with vain regret,

Than live unmoved, and all my joys forget.

NUNC DIMITTIS.

There is a time when life is full
Of bright and hopeful schemes;
No shadow dims its sunny hours,
Or chills its mirthful scenes;
Alas, that it should pass away,
As quickly as the fading day,
And only leave in sad array
The wrecks of happy dreams.

There is a time when life is dull
And full of anxious care,
The future holds no promises,
The past we can't repair;
Alas, that time should be so slow
To rid us of a sullen foe;
The heart must long in silent woe
His cruel thraldom bear.

There is a time when failing strength Proclaims the journey done; And we shall linger racked by pain, Expecting death to come; Ah, then perhaps our feeble cry May penetrate the distant sky, And God in answer will reply, "Poor soul, thy peace is won."

JOURNEYING.

The time will come,
.When thou must say good-bye
To every one;
And then the weary eye
By shades o'ercast,
Upon the earth and sky
Will look its last.

Ah, dost thou dread
The cheerless misty vale
Which thou must tread;
The bark of gloomy sail
Upon the lake;
And the thin plaintive wail
The waters make?

Chill must it be,
In that weird ship to glide
So silently;
To see the distance hide
Each trace of home;
And wander far and wide,
Strangely alone.

And yet, may be,
Fair visions born of old
Will follow thee;
For as our dreams enfold
The absent here,
So mayest thou there behold
Those who were dear.



L'ENVOL

The thoughts which lead us to our home And all the dearest joys we own, Are sent to waken in our breast Compassion for the poor distressed; They are the messengers of love, Dispatched to us from Heaven above, To bid us, for sweet pity's sake, Some work of mercy undertake.

Give to the hospitals, they cry,
Where children in their sickness lie;
And for some child your gold may earn
The precious gift of health's return;
At any rate you know 'twill bear
Relief to some poor sufferer there,
For tenderly, and not in vain,
Kind nurses soothe the children's pain.

Give to the children too, they say,
A refuge in the evil day,
When of their parents both bereft,
Alone in the great world they're left;
Your gifts will cheer some little heart,
And to the growing child impart
The knowledge needed for the strife,
Which must engage the later life.

Give, they repeat, just as you will,
So long as your good gifts fulfil
The bidding of the herald love,
Dispatched to you from Heaven above;
And if only for the dear sake
Of your own loved ones, undertake,
With kind intent and generous deed,
To help poor children in their need.



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